

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SEOUL 04722 050353Z
ACTION OPIC-06

INFO OCT-01 EA-12 ISO-00 AID-05 CEQ-01 CIAE-00 SOE-02
COME-00 DODE-00 EB-08 EPA-04 INR-10 IO-14 L-03
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FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1455

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EINV, ENRG, KS
SUBJECT: OPIC ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING PROGRAM - TEXACO
AND UNION OIL

REF: STATE 097427

1. EMBASSY OFFICER DISCUSSED ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS WITH
ROKG OFFICIALS AND REPRESENTATIVES OF HONAM OIL AND KYUNG IN.
ALL AGREED THAT REFINERIES ARE MEETING PRESENT ENVIRONMENTAL
CONTROL STANDARDS. ACCORDING TO ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL OFFICER
OF MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS, OCCASIONAL PROBLEMS
HAVE ARISEN REGARDING DISPOSAL OF WASTE OILS BY TANKERS SUPPLYING CRUD
E

TO HONAM REFINERY, BUT THEY HAVE NOT BEEN MAJOR. KYUNG IN
HAD ONE MAJOR OIL SPILL IN 1974. SUBSEQUENTLY, FIRM INSTALLED
AN OIL FENCE AT UNLOADING DOCK. ALL REFINERIES (KOCO,
HONAM, KYUNG IN) HAVE ORGANIZED A "REFINERY ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION GROUP" AMONG THEMSELVES TO COOPERATE IN CHECKING
AND CLEANING UP ANY FUTURE OIL SPILLS BY POOLING RESOURCES.

2. KYUNG IN CLAIMS TO HAVE NO AIR POLLUTION PROBLEMS AND
FIRM IS INSIDE THE REQUIRED SULFUR DIOXIDE EMISSION LIMITS.
WATER POLLUTION PROBLEMS FROM REFINERY ARE BEING MET BY USING
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API SEPARATORS AND A LARGE RETENTION POND FOR CLEANING
WASTES, PH LIMIT ESTABLISHED AT 6.0 TO 8.5, WITHIN LEGAL
LIMITS OF 5.8 TO 8.6.

3. SIMILAR FACILITIES TO CONTROL WATER POLLUTION ARE AVAILABLE
AT HONAM REFINERY. IN ADDITION, WASTE HEAT BOILER AND HIGH
STACK ARE UTILIZED TO CONTROL AIR POLLUTANTS. EMBASSY

OFFICERS HAVE VISITED BOTH FACILITIES, AND WE HAVE NO REASON TO BELIEVE COMPANIES ARE NOT COMPLYING WITH PERTINENT LAWS AND REGULATIONS ON ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROLS. WITH RESPECT TO ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROLS, PUBLIC IMAGE OF BOTH REFINERIES APPEARS GOOD.

4. ONE PROBLEM WHICH HAS ARISEN AND IS A SOURCE OF CONTENTION BETWEEN COMPANIES AND GOVERNMENT IS THE REQUIREMENT FOR PRODUCT DESULPHURIZATION UNDER NEW ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION LAW. GOVERNMENT HAS REQUESTED REFINERIES TO MAKE PLANS TO PROVIDE DESULPHURIZATION OF PRODUCTS WITHIN ALLOWABLE LIMITS BY THE END OF 1981. ALL FIRMS USE HEAVY MIDDLE EASTERN CRUDE AND INSTALLATION OF NEW FACILITIES WOULD RESULT IN ENORMOUS EXPENSE. COMPANIES ARE THEREFORE SEEKING TO CHANGE SUPPLY

MIX TO UTILIZE LOW SULFUR CRUDE FROM INDONESIA AND POSSIBLY NORTH SLOPE, BUT THE ROKG IS RELUCTANT TO AUTHORIZE IMPORTS OF THE MORE EXPENSIVE CRUDE FROM SUCH SOURCES. AT PRESENT THE SITUATION IS AT AN IMPASSE. WE BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT SOME AGREEMENT WILL BE EVENTUALLY WORKED OUT WITH COMPROMISES BY BOTH PARTIES.

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